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ABSTRACT

A study surveyed 163 women professors to identify errors they had made that interfered with their ability to gain tenure or promotion and to elicit advice they would offer to others who wished to advance in academia. The mistakes can be summarized as acquiescing to the traditional female role, resisting traditional socialization and internalizing masculine characteristics, and over-emphasizing both the differences between women and men and the discrimination in the university. Respondents offered the following advice: (1) be androgynous or behaviorally flexible; (2) do your job, particularly in the area of research and writing; (3) be self-motivated, develop an internal locus of control, or look to yourself rather than to others for your success; and (4) gain the support of other people. The observations of the women surveyed are consistent with the counsel of theorists in this area. An 11-page reference list concludes the document. (SRT)

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ACADEMIC WOMEN:  
HOW TO SUCCEED IN THE UNIVERSITY

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Plato believed that sex was of no consequence in determining the rulers of the state. In Book V of the Republic, he argued that both women and men could be rulers of the "Just State." In preparation for their future, he proposed that females and males receive the same education and that they be educated together. Although women and men are educated together in 1986, Plato's "Just State" has yet to be realized.

The status of women in higher education has improved little in the past two decades (i. e., Annis & Annis, 1983; Astin & Bayer, 1975; Boulding, 1983; Etaugh, 1984; Fields, 1983; Francis, 1981; Fulton, 1983; Gerson, 1986; Gray, 1985; Henning, 1982; Hyer, 1985; Lafontaine & McKenzie, 1985; Lincoln, 1986; Lovelady-Dawson, 1981; Passmore, 1982; Spencer, 1985; Stark, 1985; Stecklain & Lorenz, 1986; Wilce, 1983). Women have never been as well represented in academic appointments as they are representative as college students. Clark and Corcoran (1986) observe, "Although falling well short of parity, women have made small gains in hiring in the past several years, but securing an entry-level position and sustaining a successful academic career are two quite different things" (p. 20). Furthermore, the problem is even more pronounced for minority women (i. e., Boulding, 1983; Collier-Thomas, 1982; Evans, 1986; Harris, 1974; Lovelady-Dawson, 1981).

Plato's "Just State" is not a reality in other countries in the world, either. Around the globe, the female professor is in jeopardy (i. e., Frances, 1981; Maslen, 1981; 1986; Over, 1985; Sutherland, 1985; Walsh, 1981; Wiederkehr-Benz, 1982). Sutherland (1985) concludes,

Thus in looking at the situation of women in different universities in these European countries, one finds certain contrasts. . . . Yet these seem to be minor influences since the similarities are even more noticeable. There is the pyramidal distribution of women in all the university systems studied, their clustering at the lower levels of the hierarchy and in certain subject areas: their low percentages at professorial level . . . . There is, in opinions expressed in interviews, a common recognition that the university still tends to be a man's world. (pp. 27-28)

The university is a male environment. Historically, universities were run exclusively by men for male students. Women's colleges sprung up later since women were not allowed within the male institutions. Although female students now outnumber male students in some universities, men continue to control and administer both our public and private universities. Sutherland (1984) observes, that women are under-represented in higher education, particularly at the level of masterships, doctorates and university teaching.

Since the university has been a traditionally male club, it is not surprising that the rites of passage, the initiation activities, and the rules for membership reflect a masculine bias. Megarry (1984) observes:

Educational delivery systems have largely been devised by men. . . . they suit typically male patterns of education and working life fairly well, and typically female patterns rather poorly (p. 23).

Rules governing such matters as retention, promotion, and tenure are male-driven. Astin and Bayer (1975) note that,

Once on the faculty, women experience a second barrier to equality with men: the academic reward system is biased toward behaviors and activities exhibited more often by men than women. Indeed, the content of the academic reward system was established by men, so rewards go primarily to those women who accept and share men's criteria for academic rewards. Thus administration, research, and publications, which men engage into a greater extent than women, receive higher rewards than teaching, which women devote more time to than men (p. 372).

Observers have offered criticism of these man-made rules:

This reward system is far from ideal and may even be dysfunctional to the educational objectives of American colleges and universities. Indeed, the system should be examined and restructured. (Astin and Bayer, 1975, p. 372)

Not only have men served as administrators, they have also been more predominant in the teaching/researching positions. Since more men have historically been placed in academic positions, the role model of the college teacher is male. Harris (1974) observes, "The collegiate Mr. Chips and the Dr. Einsteins, tempered by Kingman Brewster types, are still the ideals" (p. 11). She adds, "There is an assumption by both male and female elitists that women are generally less well qualified than men for the higher ranks of the educational hierarchy" (p. 11).

Women have faced a variety of unique problems as they have attempted to infiltrate this male bastion. Among the female professor's barriers are both overt and subtle sex discrimination (Annis & Annis, 1983; Astin & Bayer, 1975; Campbell, 1982; Ezrati, 1983; Gray, 1985; Jobbins, 1983; Kaufman & Richardson, 1982; Menges & Exum, 1983; Roberts, 1974; Wojtax, 1983). Not only do women face overt discrimination, they also face covert forms of differential treatment. Megarry (1984) observes:

Many countries which have already legislated against direct discrimination have yet to tackle the problem of indirect discrimination--conditions applied to admission, employment or promotion which cannot be justified. Traditional rules about examination passes, age limits and types of prerequisite experience need careful reexamination (p. 25).

If women have been discriminated against, both directly and indirectly, why have measures not been taken to eradicate such inhumane behavior? Astin and Bayer (1975) offer an explanation,

Although evidence of sex discrimination in academe has mounted in the past several years, most studies of this subject have been somewhat unsystematic and limited. Some investigators have taken a head count of chairmanships or professorships held by women within a discipline. Others have made intrainstitutional assessments of the proportional distributions of men and women within ranks or comparisons of average intrarank salaries of men and women. Because these studies fail to consider such differences in

professional background as degree, length of employment, field of specialization, productivity--all criteria for rewards in higher education--the unconvinced administrator or colleague can simply cite these and a host of other neglected variables, real or imaginary, as explaining the extreme discrepancies in the position of the sexes. (p. 373)

Sutherland (1984) elaborates on another explanation:

Moreover, many people remain convinced that the natural abilities of males and females do indeed differ significantly and that from this must follow differences in the kind of life-pattern most appropriate to them. Such beliefs are often used to support an elaborate edifice based on allegedly sex-specific abilities, though in fact any observed and measured differences may be slight, showing greater differences within groups than between groups. (p. 10)

Although women and men may not have sharp differences in their natural abilities, women sometimes develop different interests and preferences than do men (Bird, 1984; Clark & Corcoran, 1986; Frieze, 1975; Hoffman, 1975; Prolman, 1982; Sayers, 1984; Stein & Bailey, 1975; Veroff, McClelland, & Ruhland, 1975). Astin and Bayer (1975) explain that

Sex discrimination in academe does not begin when a woman accepts an appointment at a college or university. Rather, its roots reach far back to the cumulative effects of

earlier sex differentiation processes and discrimination: early childhood socialization for "appropriate" sex roles, different treatment and expectations accorded to boys and girls by their parents, teachers, and peers throughout adolescence and early adulthood, differential opportunities for access and admission to undergraduate and graduate school and so forth. As a result, when they enter teaching careers in colleges and universities, most women have interests, aspirations, expectations, educational backgrounds, and life experiences that differ from those of their male counterparts (p. 372).

Clark and Corcoran (1986) similarly determined that women face a "triple penalty" that includes overcoming cultural barriers in order to enter an academic career, dealing with advisors and others who strongly doubt the women students' potential for achieving success in the academic sphere, and structural impediments to success such as opportunities for certain positions and complete participation in the collegial culture and networks. Their theoretical model is consistent with Kaufman and Richardson's (1982) perspective that one's achievement motivation is altered by the culture and our social structure. Kaufman and Richardson expound, "Women are forced to relate to the educational and occupational world (the arenas of public achievement) first as members of a subordinate sex and only secondarily as individuals" (1982, p. x).

Sexual discrimination clearly occurs in hiring and firing practices. Women also receive differential perception by their students (Bennett, 1982), differential perception by their colleagues (Reif & Hudson, 1981), and differential perception by their superiors (Roberts, 1974). One writer noted that

Women live with two existential facts that differentiate them from their male counterparts. The first fact is physical vulnerability. . . .The second . . . .is that they are not taken seriously. (Roberts, 1974, pp. 51-52)

She suggests that these combined states of vulnerability and nonseriousness are evident in sexually defined interaction patterns in the classroom. The messages that women receive in the academic setting suggest that she does not meet the standards established by, and for, men.

Yates (1975) admonishes,

Mathematics and geography are not sexual; teachers and children are. The American educational system needs a vast overhauling to abandon sex-role prescriptions for children and adults and to affirm sexuality as only one human attribute. Textbook and library book pictorial and verbal representations of men and women contributed to the learner's view of male and female roles. Teacher attitudes contribute even more. The mere presence of both women and men in the classroom speaks further. . . .Both women and men need to be trained, encouraged, and employed as teachers from preschool to the university. . . . women and men can both train the very young and investigate mature ideas. (p. 187)

Other unique problems faced by women are sexual harassment (Betts & Newman, 1982; McCain, 1983; Roberts, 1974), more demanding family roles (i. e., Anglin, 1984; Angrist & Almquist, 1975; Berg, 1986; Harris, 1974; Holden, 1985; Villadsen & Tack, 1981), role conflict (Doerfler & Kammer, 1986), lack of sponsorship or support (Apter, 1974; Clark & Corcoran, 1986), and a different communicative system (i. e., Gilligan, 1982; Kramarae, 1981; Pearson, 1985).

Within the past two decades, interest in women's perspectives, knowledge systems, symbol systems, and values has greatly increased (i. e., Anglin, 1984; Gilligan, 1982; Herman, 1984; Keeton & Baskin, 1985; Kramarae, 1981; McClure & Fowlkes, 1984; Megarry, 1984; Ochshorn, 1984; Pearson, 1985; Stimpson, 1984; Wood, McMahan, & Stacks, 1984; Wundram, 1984). Nonetheless, Megarry (1984) offers a warning,

Common to all parts of the globe, however, is the marginal status of "women and education" as a field of study. It is symptomatic that few men write or research in this field. . . . However, men overwhelmingly control the decision-making bodies in educational systems throughout the world. It is as partners--equal partners-- that women wish to join with them in improving education for both sexes. (p. 27)

The new scholarship about women suggests that male models are inappropriate when applied to women. Nonetheless, theorists agree that the male model has been used to assess female accomplishments. Similarly, women have been measured according to male standards in the university.

In order to assess women's success in the academic institution, we must inquire after the women rather than after the institution. Nonetheless, women's perspectives will be altered by the institution, itself. In other words, women who are successful within the academic institution may be those who have become "academic males." Wood, McMahan, and Stacks (1984), vehemently oppose studying women in male contexts.

. . . .the contexts for the bulk of study on women's communication are invariably male contexts: task groups, businesses, organizations. The tendency to study masculine activities and environments, then, achieves two outcomes. First, it constitutes an implicit argument for the importance of masculine issues, enterprises, and settings and a corresponding argument for the unimportance of feminine concerns, activities, and contexts. Second, it distorts descriptions, assessment, and understanding of women's communication by consistently observing it in alien environments. (p. 41)

Although we recognize that institutions of higher learning are masculine in form, we also recognize the increasing role of women in them. Further, we reluctantly agree with Yates (1975) who explained,

Without question, identity in American society is based on work. This principle is grounded in the Protestant ethic, and is primary in the American way of life. The considered worth of a human being is based on what she/he does. One of the first questions asked a stranger with whom one is

becoming acquainted is, "What do you do?" When the interlocutor receives an answer, she/he has a satisfaction that she/he "knows" the other. (p. 182)

Nonetheless, one shortcoming of consulting with women who have been successful in the university is that they may have only been able to achieve this success by internalizing a male model for their behavior.

Langer (1962) observes that we live in a "web of ideas, a fabric of our own making" (p. 147). Cole (1979) added that "there is a conspicuous absence of qualitative interviews with female [academics]" (p. 15) and that it is time for us to describe in detail the informal activities and experiences of younger academics "that set in motion and sustain an accumulation of advantages and disadvantages" (p. 130). This report provides qualitative information about how to succeed as a female college professor in the speech communication related disciplines.

The preceding discussion suggests that a caveat is in order. Research reports which detail how women can be successful in male contexts might be viewed as inappropriate or questionable on three grounds. First, we might ask serious questions about a culture that is so inhumane that it discriminates against a group on the basis of biological sex. Second, we might wonder after a group that holds that the basis for human identity and the chief component of social class and position lie in one's work and one's income. Third, we might doubt that a subjugated class would wish to engage in organized work that is based on

rules created by the dominant class and that favors that dominant class.

Rather than offer reports on how women can succeed in male contexts and with male rules, we probably should be changing those contexts. We should be insuring that women are given the same opportunities for education and employment placement. We should be insuring that individuals and institutions are liable when they discriminate or harass women. We should be insuring that the recruitment of faculty members is manifestly open to both women and men. We should be insuring that departmental chairs or officers who fail to recommend women for appointment, retention, promotion, or tenure, be required to explain, in detail, why women were not recommended. We should be insuring that in departments in which there are no women or fewer than are available in the particular discipline that special recruitment of women occur immediately to correct the past intentional or accidental discrimination. We should be insuring that nepotism rules which generally prohibit the employment of the wife should be eliminated. We should be insuring that women in employment evaluation should be credited with all relevant nonacademic experience, and be paid accordingly (Harris, 1974). Moreover, we should be changing the institution to allow persons with uniquely distinctive abilities, interests, and desires to engage in work that is personally satisfying and of benefit to the entire society, not just one segment of it. But until our values and attitudes are reshuffled, and until our institutions of higher education are feminized to the extent that they are truly androgynous, research reports such as this are both necessary and appropriate.

## PROCEDURE

A questionnaire was sent to all Associate Professorial and Professorial women whose names and addresses were listed in the 1983 Speech Communication Association Directory. The survey was mailed in August, 1983 and respondents were asked to return the questionnaire by October 1, 1983. A follow-up letter was mailed in October which asked respondents to reply no later than November 1, 1983.

Three hundred and sixty-four persons received the survey. Twenty-one questionnaires were received as undelivered returns and 31 questionnaires were from men, retired persons, deceased individuals, or from people who were in a different career since the Directory had been published. Of the 313 potential subjects, 163 completed the questionnaire which results in a 52 percent response rate (Lin, 1976).

The questionnaire sought information on demographic information, the women's contributions to research and professional associations, the women's pedagogical contributions, their unofficial leadership and personal style, and generalizations about their own careers and the counsel they might provide to other women. Most of the questions were closed-ended or asked for brief responses. The results of that portion of the survey have been reported (Pearson & Trent, 1986). Two questions asked for detailed information about the errors that women in our profession have made which interfered with their ability to gain tenure and/or promotion and the advice that these women would offer to others who wished to gain tenure and/or promotion. The responses to those two items forms the basis of the present report. 14

**ERRORS MADE BY WOMEN ASPIRING TO BE TENURED**

What mistakes do female professionals in our field make? They may be summarized as acquiescing to the traditional female role, resisting traditional socialization and internalizing masculine characteristics, and overly emphasizing both the differences between women and men and the discrimination that occurs in the university.

**ACQUIESCING TO THE FEMALE ROLE**

Most of the successful women surveyed felt that women erred when they acquiesced to the traditional female role. They suggested that among female mistakes were "Playing the role of 'female' rather than 'colleague' or 'professional,'" and "Becoming 'academic moms' in the classroom." One woman explained,

Become too engrossed in the fact of being a woman. We are human beings and, as such, can be equally as capable and successful as men. We are no better or no worse than our male counterparts.

The respondents' comments which focused on acquiescence to the traditional female role can be summarized into 12 categories. Women were thought to err when they were 1) Unassertive; 2) Submissive; 3) Lacking in motivation and/or training; 4) Lacking in confidence; 5) Lacking in aspirations; 6) Overly trusting; 7) Lacking in cooperation; 8) Lacking in competition; 9) Of Differing skills; 10) Too Relational; 11) Lacking in leadership; and 12) Doing too much for too little gain.

Unassertive. Women might not succeed because of their lack of assertiveness. Comments which suggest that women are not assertive include they are "not aggressive enough," "they take what is given and do not rebel," "they are unable to say 'no,'" "they hold themselves back," they are not "stubborn enough," they "give up too easily," they "frequently won't 'fight back' or challenge the system," they "fail to speak out," or they "do not speak up," and they are "afraid to defend their ideas." One woman observed, "The females are willing to settle for less favorable teaching situations and take less pay." Another added: "They are not assertive; they do not seek offices, they do not demand time for research. A third opined, "They fail to confront sexism aggressively,"

Submissive. Women are too often submissive and dominated by men according to a number of respondents. Comments which show their domination by men include they are "intimidated by men or they defer to them," they are "too subservient or willing to accept authority," they are "dominated," they "defer to males," they "allow male colleagues to bully or dominate them," they "let male leaders scare them," they "take 'back seats' to men," they are "ingratiating to male faculty members, as indicated by the number of apologetic 'tag' words and simpering actions," they are "too willing to bow to male insistence on the way 'we do things,'" and they "develop behaviors that identify the woman as 'dependent' on male colleagues." Women also appear to "follow the rules and suggestions of others or the department too closely," and they "try to please." One respondent explained male dominance historically,

In earlier years, the field of technical and scientific communication was dominated by men--a strong "good old boys' network." Women who entered the field were intimidated, and did not assert themselves at national meetings either by proposing papers or volunteering for various tasks.

Overly trusting. Perhaps one of the reasons that women submit to men or to authority figures is that they are trusting. Although only a few women commented on the notion of being overly trusting, some suggested that being unquestioningly trusting was an error. Some women wrote that others are too trusting of men or that they trust all men. One concluded her remarks by stating, "We are, in general, too trusting."

Too relational. Another explanation for women's willingness to submit to men may be their concern for relationships. Some women might value harmonious working relationships over "winning" on any specific issue. Some of the comments suggested that women "worry too much about being liked and accepted" and that they are overly concerned with relational matters. We noted the comment that women "try to please." In addition, a respondent suggested that women "take criticism too seriously or personally."

Lacking in leadership. Perhaps some women allow men to lead them because they do not wish to play a leadership role. Some of the respondents wrote that women "too frequently won't take on a position of responsibility," that women rely on men "to guide the decision-making," and that they exhibit a "hesitancy in assuming leadership (don't want to be a 'pushy woman')." Women

may view their academic role differently than do men:

"Identifying themselves as a school teacher role instead of trying for leadership roles." Some women's reluctance to lead shows itself in their inability to delegate work to others and their consequent excessive work load.

Doing too much for too little gain. Although working too much for too little gain may not be a uniquely female trait, women oftentimes are willing to be "superwomen." The respondents observed that women "attempt too much," that they do "not delegate enough," that they "try to accomplish too much because of the 'academic expectations' they perceive," that they "over do--try to work beyond and above expectations," that they are "too willing to be all things to all people and all too often, agree to do everything," that they "become too dependable, so there's not enough time to do original work," that they "overcommit," and that they are generally "too 'giving' as compared to males: therefore, overworked."

Women may be particularly willing to overextend themselves in some kinds of academic work. Women are viewed as "too willing to do workshops, inservices, etc. for no fee or too modest a fee," spend "excessive time with counseling/advising," "Are too involved in Mickey Mouse departmental committees that do not count for their advancement," and they "allow themselves to be overburdened with inconsequential departmental and college/university chores, committees, etc."

Differing skills. Perhaps women overextend themselves in the areas of counseling, advising, workshops, and committee work

because they have different interests or skills than men. Women may be socialized to have different preferences. Many of the women observed that women tend to do the wrong things to succeed. They suggested that women may currently spend their energies on teaching, counseling, advising, service, and committee work rather than on the more frequently rewarded publishing, researching, and administering. One respondent suggested that women may "miscalculate priorities." One respondent suggested that these choices might be especially important

if desiring an administrative position: Spending so much time with students and departmental activities that participation in college activities which could prompt leadership considerations are largely, or totally, neglected.

Another woman added that service work is "back room work" which holds "no front room visibility."

One of the areas that was most frequently mentioned was women's failure to do research. Further, the respondents suggested that even when women engage in research, they may choose unpopular topics or unusual procedures. One woman added insight: "They get involved in unconventional new types of research (this is not a mistake, per se, but it slows one down." Related to the failure to do research was the successful completion of the Ph.D.: "They don't finish degrees or publish before they seek jobs too frequently."

Another area in which women do not participate as fully as men are in professional organizations: "Their concern is not frequent enough in areas of publishing, consulting and making national contact. Another wrote, they "avoid the 'politics' of associations and universities--i.e., do not participate in interest groups, committees, run for offices."

They also noted the multiple roles that women often play.

The academic rewards are more often found in publication and research. The majority of female faculty place emphasis on teaching and advising. Male faculty members are less apt to be doubling as homemaker and parent-in-charge.

The "Superwoman" must serve a variety of roles.

Lacking in motivation and/or training. We have already observed that women may have different strengths than men and that some women have not internalized the masculine characteristics of their jobs. Many women suggested that unsuccessful female colleagues are sometimes not motivated, they are not socialized to be a professional, they often attend less desirable graduate schools, or they do not complete their academic training. In other words, unsuccessful women were viewed as not serious enough about their careers and education. Typical among the comments were "No personal and individual motivation and drive--Not socialized into being a professional," and "Limiting their scope/abilities because of their sex."

Many women commented on the failure of their colleagues to complete their degrees or associated problems with graduate school. Some respondents suggested that some women did not

"enter into graduate degree programs leading to Ph. D." Others suggested that colleagues failed to "complete the terminal degree." One woman disclosed, "I am 50 and did not seek a Ph. D. in 1956--a big mistake." The lack of mentors was also mentioned: "Go too often to schools without professional mentors," "Failure to secure mentors," and "Not selecting an appropriate mentor." The quality of doctoral programs was also cited: "I chose a 3rd rate Ph. D. program instead of a top notch one--and will always suffer from the lack of professionalism/social preparation." Also related to poor training was the determination that women did not acquire the necessary skills for success: "Too few learn the skills which lead to administrative positions" and "Not acquiring technical skills, e.g., computer programming."

A few mentioned that women did not dress or act like a professional. One woman wrote that the primary problem women had was their "failure to look and act as professionals--either on their campus or at professional meetings." Another stated that women tend to "dress too casually, wear no make-up, hair-unkempt."

Lacking in aspirations. The successful women wrote that other females sometimes think small ("they minimize contributions as 'part' of the job"), they are unambitious ("aim too low," "limit goals," and "lack clearcut goals and objectives"), and they have too few role models. One woman explained, "There are also fewer women so the major mistake is just not aspiring to a career as a university professor and

researcher." One professor said that women sometimes do "not take advantage of opportunities--[they do] not capitalize." Again, women's multiple roles were mentioned: "Sometimes women seem to be more interested in husbands and children than in work."

Lacking in confidence. Related to a lack of aspirations are a lack of confidence. Among the comments are that women are too "apologetic," they "lack self-confidence," they "underestimate their strengths," they are "self-conscious," they "make excuses when they assert themselves as though they should not," they "underestimate their strengths," they "work hard and do not realize their own worth," they "don't take risks," they "devalue their own abilities," they "sometimes seem to doubt their potential," they "undervalue their accomplishments," they "sell themselves short," they "express low self-esteem," and they do not "let others know of their worth/accomplishments." One woman suggested that some women's lack of confidence may be a reasonable response to reality: "[There are] not enough members for role models, influencing hiring decisions, winning elections, etc." Another suggested that older women may particularly lack confidence: "Perhaps not thinking they are good enough, but I think that is symptomatic of women in my age group (50's)."

Lacking in cooperation. Some women suggested that others did not cooperate with each other--just as women are taught to compete with each other for the attention of men, they compete with each other in the workplace. Among the comments were that

women "do not cooperate," they "ignore other female colleagues," they "fail to organize with other female colleagues," they "accept stereotypes of themselves and fail to support successful females," and there are no "old girls" networks which are similar to the "old boys" networks. One professor wrote that some women "sharpen the competitive edge at the expense of maintaining or developing cooperation/collaboration."

Lacking in competition. While women may be socialized to compete with each other, they are taught to cooperate with men. Some of the comments suggested that women lack aggression, risk-taking behavior, initiation of activities, and that they are generally not sufficiently competitive. The professors wrote that women "give up too soon," they are "insufficiently competitive," they are not "alert/sensitive to diverse professional activities available for professional advancement," they are "too hesitant," they "wait to be asked to hold office, participate in faculty governance, etc.," that they "behave in a tentative, indecisive way," and that they do "not experiment enough."

#### ADOPTING THE MALE ROLE

A second category of comments suggests that women sometimes err when they resist traditional socialization and adopt masculine behaviors. More to the point, these comments suggest that women have sometimes "out-manned" their male counterparts. The respondents noted that women sometimes "try to be men," "tend toward the male role model instead of functioning as an individual," "Spend too much time/energy proving that they are

equal to men--and trying to act like them in public," or are "Loud and loose." One woman cautioned, "Being 'equal' does not mean taking on the worst characteristics of men." Another added, [The] "Big danger now is loss of feminine virtues in achieving masculine virtues, too."

One woman offered an explanation and illustration:

Only one [problem] has bothered me: seemingly assuming masculine attributes or characteristics when attempting to fill a traditionally masculine role. I could not accept Jessica Savitch as news anchor for about two years even though I had no such problem with Connie Chung and cited Hillary Brown to my students as a positive role model for the maintenance of her natural self in the field. I find some of this in the university classroom and the research arena. It is as though an individual woman is implicitly saying through her behaviors, "I can succeed at this because I can be as 'masculine' as any man." When she ought--in my judgment--continue to be herself in the display of her competence, expertise, capability with no sense of an obligation to assume a "role" for the sake of competing effectively.

How do women err by behaving in a manner that is overly masculine for them as judged by the respondents? The comments may be divided into four categories: 1) Too aggressive, 2) Too self-centered, 3) Not trusting, and 4) Insensitive or lacking in empathy.

Too aggressive. Some of the comments observed that women are sometimes overly assertive or aggressive, that they speak up

too frequently. Among these comments were that women were "overly assertive," "opinionated," "too bitchy," "Use behavior which is interpreted as aggressive--trying to take over situations," and "Sometimes make too many demands." The respondents noted that "[women] tend to want to dominate and are often heavy handed about it," "Sometimes females create some 'noise,'" "[They] adopt manipulative and excessive, political styles of professional behavior," and are "Too aggressive--fighting causes rather than seeing the whole picture--and they don't know when to stop/to back off."

Some of the comments revealed, however, that the women being criticized for their aggressiveness might not be so harshly judged. For instance, the respondent who wrote that sometimes women make too many demands, added, "Demands for typewriters, for example." Most of us would agree that such a "demand" might not be categorized as aggressive behavior. Others, too, qualified their criticism of aggressiveness. One wrote, "Sometimes women are too pushy. On the other hand, it can be a mistake to 'Knuckle under.'" Another summarized, "I think it is difficult for a woman, in what I perceive as a man's world, to be regarded as assertive, and still not aggressive. It is difficult to assert yourself without being perceived as a 'bitch.'" Finally one advised, "Be tactfully aggressive."

Too self-centered. The comments suggested that sometimes women fail because they are too self-seeking. One insight was offered:

Too many young women are too self-seeking. In their drive to move ahead, they step on toes and then feel aggrieved when rebuked. They create their own problems by wanting too much before they've demonstrated worth. We all have to pay our dues.

Not trusting. Although some of the comments earlier observed that women are sometimes too trusting, comments in this category suggested that some women trusted no one or that they trust no men.

Insensitive or lacking in empathy. Some of the women suggested that less successful colleagues are occasionally ruthless, defensive, or unfeeling. Comments include notions that women are sometimes "too serious" or "too negative." One woman wrote that the problem she perceived was that women "Forget they are women and become as ruthless and unfeeling as most (but certainly not all) men." Defensiveness was illustrated by another comment:

Some women seem bent on proving their worth so much that an almost defensive manner develops--a kind of expectation that males will not take you seriously as a professional.

Beware. Have no "axe to grind."

#### EMPHASIZE DIFFERENCES AND DISCRIMINATION

A third general area centers on the notion that women in our profession often (perhaps too often) observe that they are women and that differences between themselves and their male counterparts are in evidence. In response to the question, "What mistakes do women in our discipline make," they wrote,

"Worry about being female," "Fear of losing female role,"  
"Concentrating on differences between males and females,"  
"Remembering and forever reminding others that they are female."

Such a perspective may lead to other problems as one woman wrote, "The major mistake is that females often view themselves as different and fail as a result, to interact and act as they might otherwise have." Some women felt that others used gender differences as an excuse: "Too frequently hide behind excuse of sex discrimination," "Blaming sexism for a variety of inadequacies," "Devaluing their own abilities or blaming their own failures on sexist prejudices," "Use the 'women's issue' as an excuse instead of rolling up sleeves and going to work," and "Blame every failure on someone's prejudice." Too, one respondent stated, that another problem was "Being belligerent or hostile in stating and acting upon feminist views." Another problem that may result from our perception of gender differences was stated: "Accepting stereotypes of themselves and failing to support successful females."

Women's awareness of, and sensitivity to, differences between the sexes is certainly well founded. Clear differences do exist in our perceptions, attitudes, and behavior. Furthermore, others judge us differentially on the basis of our biological sex. Two women pointed out that while it may be a mistake to over-emphasize sex differences, we should not rest on our laurels and believe that the day of equality has dawned. One respondent wrote, "Young women are sometimes unaware of the subtle but powerful discrimination that is still rampant in our

society." Another said that a major problem was "Believing that men have moved away from sexism and will give women a fair chance."

#### DON'T ASK!

A fourth category of remarks did not assail the behaviors of professional women, but rebuked the researchers for asking about the mistakes of female colleagues. One woman wrote, "All people make mistakes, not just females!" Another observed, "I believe the main thing that holds them back is not 'mistakes' but choices, mainly choices to have children and to spend time taking care of them. This choice, while admirable and important for the society slows the woman's professional progress."

Some of the women felt that we should inquire about male mistakes. One wrote, "I don't feel that women make mistakes. I feel that they are excluded from the old boy "One leg up" help-each-other out syndrome: and I do mean deliberately and viciously excluded." Another stated,

I don't think it's the females who are making the mistakes. Why don't you ask what mistakes the men make? There are many authoritarian tendencies being foremost among them. One woman suggested, "This is a biased question, suggesting only women need advice--I would offer equivalent different criticism and advice to a man."

Other respondents moved the burden of the problem from women to society. One wrote,

I'm not sure that I think women "make" the "mistakes." I do think society does not provide the supports needed by women

to function unstressfully in their multi-functioned role. In short, reality does not match the theory of the "liberated" female. If anything, modern women are forced to function as superwomen. (Forced of course is not literal; I mean if a person wants both a professional and family life.)

Another stated,

The problem is not females' errors, but lack of equality of opportunity in the situations they are in both in grad school and on the job. The Reagan mentality is too widespread and influential.

Finally, one concluded,

My feeling is that successful women in our field, to a large extent, are those who have internalized a male standard of behavior. Most of them publish, conduct research, teach graduate classes, are currently (or aspire to be) administrators, and most important, have succeeded in the male academic setting. Therefore it is not surprising that they recommend masculine behaviors to other women who wish to succeed. We might question whether our institutions of higher education should be male, but we cannot deny that they are.

#### ADVICE TO ASPIRING TENURED PROFESSORS

The successful women in the speech communication field identified a variety of mistakes that female colleagues sometimes make, and they also provided advice to other women who aspire to promotion and tenure. Their advice included suggestions about personal qualities and skills such as being confident, honest, assertive, initiating with others, knowing

and clarifying goals, being aware of sexism, and developing a sense of humor. The overwhelming suggestions made by many of the women, however, fell into four categories. They can be summarized as 1) be androgynous or behaviorally flexible, 2) do your job, particularly in the area of research and writing, 3) be self-motivated, develop an internal locus of control, or look to yourself rather than to others for your success, and 4) gain the support of other people.

#### BEHAVE ANDROGYNOUSLY

The successful speech communication professor (if she follows her own advice) has the traits of both stereotypical women and men. In this way she is consistent with Bernard's (1975) finding that successful career women are "role transmitters" who are both more masculine and more feminine than other women and with McBroom's (1986) advice that women must integrate both their female and male selves in the workplace and at home. A number of the respondents noted this combination. For example, one woman wrote:

Get two educations: one, the male one to learn the tools and to be able to choose to compete and win; the other, the female one of nonviolence and noncompetitiveness which is ultimately the only hope of the profession and of the world. Have a strong support group of women (and men if you desire) to help you live with this contradiction.

Another added,

I believe androgyny is a valued goal for behavior. . . . Do not devalue feminine traits nor overvalue masculine ones. Learn to be flexible, to adapt behaviors to situations.

Specific recommendations were made: "Learn to use assertive language but, at the same time, maintain attractive female qualities of communicative style," and

Don't blame a lack of success on the fact that you are female. Work as hard as colleagues--but don't feel that you have to "out work" others because you are female. Avoid the "poor little me" syndrome. Set your personal and professional priorities and work to avoid guilt when conflict arises in either area.

Two women concluded, "Don't let your sex dictate the extent to which you are able to achieve," and "Try to be more of a person, less of a female."

Flexibility and balance marked many of the answers of the respondents. One woman suggested, "Keep a balance between academic pursuits and personal development," and another advised, "Balance work and play, family and profession." A number of women considered the multiple roles that women play in both the professional and personal arenas. One advised,

Write and establish yourself first, only then allow yourself the luxury of a family, and make sure you have the necessary supports to function well in two demanding and fulfilling careers.

Another suggested, "You can have a family and career, but get help and enlist your husband early." One professional recommended that others "Marry late or marry a supportive husband or don't marry. Have children only if your spouse is really committed to parenting." Similarly, one woman proposed

Before getting married, prepare a written contract that will ensure your opportunity to work toward your goals; don't settle for less than a 50-50 division of responsibilities for homemaking and parenting.

Finally, one woman disclosed,

In my area--forensics coach--it is difficult to do justice to an active forensics program--14-18 weekend tournaments a year and have a family unless your husband is very supportive of your work--but I think it would also be true of a male--they would need a very supportive wife.

Perhaps the most intriguing set of responses that the data provided within this category was the idea that female speech communication professors should be the "best that you can be." This notion is not novel, after all, even the U. S. Army has relied upon it in their advertising campaigns. However, the comments had both content and relational importance. Not only were the respondents suggesting that women should strive to do all things well, but they were also serving a support function even as they wrote. Their comments cheered their female colleagues. A sample follows: "Do the best that you can," "Do a good job, work hard, 'toot your own horn' (sparingly) if no one else does," "Go for it!" "Go after what you want," "Go with your intelligence and talent!" and "Be proud." One woman elaborated,

Be the best that you can be--reach for that, prepare yourself for it and go after it. Think of this as a lifelong commitment--place it in the proper perspective in

your life and create a commitment that you enjoy, are satisfied with, finding stimulating and challenging and be confident in your success and satisfaction.

The enthusiasm and excitement in such remarks was unmistakable. These successful women demonstrated the kind of dynamism that probably contributed to their success.

#### DO YOUR JOB

"Hard work" is probably responsible for success in many fields. The women surveyed suggested that women who want to succeed as speech communication professionals would have to work diligently to achieve their goals. They suggested, "Do what is expected of a person in your position," "Work hard," "Earn your successes through hard work and creative thinking, writing, and teaching," "Expend energies on productivity rather than a negativistic doldrums of feeling discriminated against sexually," "Take on seemingly "hard" tasks/assignments," "Be willing to 'risk,'" "Do your homework," "Know your field," "Don't count hours," and "Do more than is expected." One respondent advised,

Work at becoming respected as a person and a professional on your own campus. Campus support of leadership (eventually) is crucial.

They warned women, "Don't become complacent because you're doing a 'good job.'" They also suggested that women might have to work harder than men: "Don't complain--just work hard--harder than others around you," and "Recognize that you may have to work harder and do more than your male counterpart and do it if you want to succeed."

In addition to suggestions that women would have to engage in hard work if they were to succeed, the respondents similarly viewed appropriate training and specific skills as routes to success. A number of them observed the importance of gaining one's Ph. D. from a well-known university or a top-rated graduate school. One woman admonished, "Do your degree work where there are individuals with high visibility." They also noted that women should complete their terminal degrees as quickly as possible. This advice is consistent with that provided by Kreps (1974).

What subjects are most important for women? Many suggested specific course work. For instance, some stated that statistics and computer science courses were key. One respondent wrote, "Master statistics, even if you have limited research interest." Others felt that interpersonal communication was important and that specific coursework in our field was essential. One stated, "Know the theory behind the skills--know your discipline well." Still others suggested that practical experience was important: "Get practical (educational) experience along with grad school (training & development, work in business/industry)."

On the other hand, some women felt that women should have a broad-based academic background and experience, that they should not limit themselves too narrowly. One woman wrote, "Read everything so that you are as informed as possible." Another wrote,

Read widely outside the field. (True for men as well, of course!) Narrow pedagogues we don't need.

Keep up with the research and developments in the field.

Similarly, one advised,

Prepare yourself with as much information as possible about topics likely to be discussed in any interview or committee meeting.

Finally, one woman concluded,

Develop your skills and do the best you can in a professional manner. Develop both a broad background and a specialty, and be able to adopt to whatever professional opportunities may develop. Expect change in all aspects of your professional life.

The traditional areas of research, teaching, and service generally provide a model by which professors are judged. Do the successful women recommend that other females allocate equal amounts of time working in these three areas? Clearly, they do not. One of the clearest messages that the successful professors provided was that women need to publish. Kreps (1974) similarly noted that female professors should "invest more time in research, leaving men to give greater emphasis to teaching" (p. 77). The women in this study wrote, "Write," "Research," "Deliver papers," "Work on your professional writing; welcome criticism from professors and editors, and publish your ideas which are worth sharing," "Publish, don't wait to be brilliant," "Establish a sound research record," "Avoid committee work until your tenure case is made," "Submit papers for conventions and publications continuously," and "Associate with other professionals as a

co-author to get started." They also suggested that women publish in the mainstream journals. One woman disclosed, "Publish more in communication journals--I have too much of my material in other fields." One woman observed that it is sometimes difficult for the professor to provide research:

. . . . choosing a position where time is given for research. My teaching load is so heavy, there is little time to research, especially in the speech field where class size is limited.

Some suggested that effective teaching was also important. One woman noted, "If you accept a teacher's salary, don't neglect your teaching duties." Among the specific advice given was "With respect to teaching: to balance one's concern for students with one's allegiance to subject matter," and "Throughout career, work at becoming a "better" teacher.

Professional activity was also viewed as relevant. The women suggested that others become or remain active in professional organizations. They urged colleagues to become involved at both the local and national levels. One respondent wrote, "Volunteer for activities in the profession." Another encouraged, "Get professionally active by volunteering for jobs until you get known." They provided specific suggestions: "Attend and work for business meetings of Interest Groups and Divisions," "Attend professional meetings even if at your own expenses," "Get elected to offices," and "Invest in your career; set aside money for meeting attendance every year."

Most of the respondents observed that women already spend far too much time engaged in service activities. They were very straightforward in their recommendations: "Avoid service work," and "Cut back on committee work." Only one woman stated that female professionals should engage in service, but her suggestion was not without a creative flair: "Accept committee posts, and fulfill your duties creatively."

#### DEVELOP AN INTERNAL LOCUS OF CONTROL

People with an external locus of control allow others to set their standards and to influence their perceptions while people with an internal locus of control use themselves as a judge and a guide. The women surveyed clearly demonstrated an internal locus of control. Cole (1979) described faculty women as "survivors" and the women in this study fit that category. They wrote, "Be yourself," "Set your own standards for success and happiness, and strive to achieve them," "Develop personal standards and goals early," "Keep your own counsel as you progress," "Don't forget your humanity and the multiple perceptions you have developed as a woman," "Do not allow others to determine your self-concept," "If you find yourself unhappy with your system, move on," "Try not to get trapped into tenure too young--job security isn't everything," and "Don't be too self-conscious about achieving a 'successful' career, look for rewarding work through which you can feel that you are making a contribution."

Some of the respondents clarified their remarks with more detail:

Choose to behave in ways that please yourself. Think clearly about your goals and ideals and behave in ways that will help you reach those goals and ideals.

Another wrote:

Try to be "in the world of academic bureaucracy but not of it." (Be centered within yourself; don't look to others for professional confirmation.)

One woman recommended:

Try not to pay attention to people who consciously or unconsciously will try to undermine you. You can determine the shape of your interactions by the way you respond to others.

Finally, one concluded,

Be yourself and develop your talents and abilities and interests. Hopefully, despite male resistance, your talents will eventually be recognized. (I realize that this notion has been used to pacify women in the past. But I think, now, that there are more opportunities for women and new attitudes toward women by some younger men, that if women continue to do their job well, they will eventually receive recognition.

Although successful women in speech communication, if they take their own advice, have internal loci of control, they are also well aware of others in the professional arena. One respondent summarized,

Successful professional women in our field have well developed senses of themselves. At the same time, they are cooperative, abide by normative behavior, and are "team players."

In the next section, too, we will observe the importance of colleagues, administrators, and students in female professors' success.

#### GAIN THE SUPPORT OF OTHERS

Female speech communication professors view other people in the workplace as important contributors to their success. This finding is consistent with that of Clark and Corcoran (1986) who determined that one of women's most pressing needs in the academic setting is sponsorship. The women in this study identified two groups of people as influential. First, colleagues are consequential as they supply support and reality checking. Second, mentors or role models are essential as they provide guidelines and assist women in avoiding historical mistakes. We observed earlier that women are often times provided with negative feedback in the university (Roberts, 1974) so it appears consistent that they are particularly in need of supportiveness.

Let us consider the women's comments. They noted the helpfulness of colleagues within the department and across the campus: "Learn the campus politics, find a supportive friend (or two) on campus," "Find female supporters/partners for reality-checking," "Seek out and maintain a support system," "Get to know everyone you can and develop a reputation these people respect," "Talk to other women," "Do not be afraid to ask for advice and favors, men do it all the time," "Be sensitive to other females," "Join all the 'old girl' networks possible," "Use friendships," and "Get known."

Other women offered more specific detail:

Make connections with successful women in your area--there are very useful informal networks and support groups. Ally yourself with other women on your campus--they can provide support and information.

Another explained the female "network of cooperation":

Seek out female power structure on campus and join it. If it doesn't exist overtly (it always exists covertly), organize it. Help develop a female network of cooperation such as men have used to advance each other in the business and professional world.

A third supported the importance of networking:

Seeking your own personal success entails helping others and acknowledging the help of others. Networking is invaluable but you have to prove worth by responsible handling, commitment and action in your professional life.

The women surveyed sought out people who were considered to be more powerful than themselves and those with less power. The women urged others, "Network with powerful people in the institution to gain exposure and support of projects," "Work closely with those of higher rank as well as others on faculty," "In talking with your superiors help shape their perceptions of you and talk to them often," and "Do not 'closet' yourself away and say 'I'll show them!' They need to interact with you to understand you." On the other hand, they advised, "Help other women once you're in a position to do so."

Women in our profession are also viewed as important: Ours is a more closely knit group than most. The members are very generous with suggestions and give much support to each other.

One woman stated succinctly, "Be active in professional organizations."

Mentors were viewed as key to the professional woman's success. The women wrote, "Find a mentor," "Seek out able and nonsexist males for mentoring, information, support, etc.," "Find a mentor--who has influence and power," and "Find a hard nosed mentor." However, one warned, "Mentors are desperately needed--but awkward to find and sexual relationships easily assumed."

#### SUMMARY

The women in this survey were both helpful and clear in identifying errors that other women had made and in providing advice for the colleague who wishes to attain tenure and promotion. If they are accurate, we should avoid acquiescing to the female role, internalizing masculine characteristics, and placing too much emphasis on differences between women and men and the discrimination that occurs in the university. We should attempt to behave flexibly or androgynously, we should perform our job, particularly in the areas of research and writing, we should be self-motivated rather than looking to others for our success, and we should gain the support of other people. Their observations are not inconsistent with the counsel of theorists in this area (i. e., Apter, 1974; Bennett, 1985; Deans, 1984;

Elder, 1984; Fisk & Sandbank, 1982; Foster, 1984; Fowlkes & McClure, 1984; Futrell, 1985; Green, 1982; Harder & Waldo, 1983; Harris, 1974; Herman, 1984; Holt, 1981; Howard, 1986; Keeton & Baskin, 1985; Kreps, 1974; Ochshorn, 1984; Perry, 1983; Perry, 1983a; Prolman, 1982; Tenney, 1982; Vogel, 1985; Witt, 1983).

Francis Bacon observed that "knowledge is power." The goal of this project was to provide information that might allow a larger percentage of women to find success in achieving promotion and tenure in speech communication and related fields. To the extent that women can learn from the mistakes of their colleagues and heed their advice, they may become empowered.

John Naisbitt, author of Megatrends, wrote,

Although women are gaining access to power individually, the very nature of power will change as their numbers mount. A synergy of male and female leadership qualities will emerge, a new combination that is to everyone's advantage.

To conclude with the words of one of the respondents, "Remember the best revenge is success."

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